

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 01057 01 OF 02 112049Z

64

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 PRS-01 NEAE-00 /042 W

----- 065229

P R 111445Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 2433

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN JORDAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO EGYPT

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SUADI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

CNO WASHINGTON DC

SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 1057

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, BA

SUBJECT: BAHRAINI POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: FOREIGN
MINISTER'S COMMENTS

1. SEPTEMBER 11 FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE ME PRIVATE " PARTY LINE"
ON GOB DECISION TO DISSOLVE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND TO SUSPEND
ARTICLE OF CONSTITUTION REQUIRING RECONVENING OF PRESENT
ASSEMBLY OR ELECTION OF A NEW ONE WITHIN TWO MONTHS. HE SAID
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 01057 01 OF 02 112049Z

INITIATIVE FOR THIS STEP HAD COME FROM PRIME MINISTER, WHO

OVER SUMMER IN CONSULTATION WITH AMIR, FOREIGN MINISTER AND INTERIOR MINISTER HAD COME TO CONCLUSION CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS IT HAD BEEN CONSTITUTED AND OPERATED FOR LAST TWO YEARS WAS HARMFUL TO BAHRAIN'S NATIONAL INTEREST. BY MID-AUGUST THIS INNER AL KHALIFA GROUP HAD FORMULATED RECENTLY ANNOUNCED STEPS AS AN OPTION FOR DEALING WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROBLEM. IN THIRD WEEK AUGUST ENTIRE CABINET, WHICH FOREIGN MINISTER DESCRIBED AS MORE BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE OF "BETTER ELEMENTS" OF BAHRAIN THAN ASSEMBLY, HAD UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED TO FOLLOW THIS OPTION. GOB DETERMINED THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE, DEMOCRACY IN BAHRAIN MUST PROCEED IN A NEW DIRECTION AND THAT THERE ARE MANY URGENT ISSUES FACING GOVERNMENT AND COUNTRY WHICH MUST BE HANDLED IN COMING MONTHS BY GOVERNMENT WITHOUT IMPEDIMENT OF FRACTIOUS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) EXCEPT FOR SUSPENDED ARTICLE 65, CONSTITUTION REMAINS IN EFFECT AND BASIS OF ALL LAW SECTIONS DEALING WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OBVIOUSLY MUST BE AMENDED IN DUE COURSE.

(B) GOB DETERMINED TO PURSUE "DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT" IN RECOGNITION OF PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO HAVE A VOICE IN HOW THEY ARE GOVERNED.

(C) THERE WAS, OF COURSE, NO CLEAR SECURITY THREAT TO REGIME. GOB MERELY SEIZED ON INEFFECTUAL INTENT OF CERTAIN RADICAL ELEMENTS AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING, ON "SECURITY GROUNDS", MOVES IT FELT OTHERWISE NECESSARY. GOB WAS CONVINCED, HOWEVER, CONTINUATION OF DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT ALONG NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LINES WOULD IN LONG RUN BE DETRIMENTAL TO SECURITY AND WELFARE OF STATE.

(D) NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS "FAILURE", BRINGING INTO LIME-LIGHT ELEMENTS "UNREPRESENTATIVE" OF REAL BAHRAINI OPINION. THESE INCLUDED "DISLOYAL" AND DISRUPTIVE "MARXISTS" ON THE LEFT AND, MORE DANGEROUS IN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEW, IRRECONCILABLE "RELIGIOUS FANATICS" ON RIGHT.

(E) GOB PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AT GENERALLY FAVORABLE PUBLIC REACTION TO ITS DECISION. FOREIGN MINISTER CLAIMED THAT MERCHANT CLASS, WHICH INITIALLY HAD PUBLICLY SUPPORTED AND PRIVATELY OPPOSED ASSEMBLY EXPERIMENT, NOW PUBLICLY SUPPORTS GOB'S DECISION TO TERMINATE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHILE PRIVATELY URGING SOME ALTERNATIVE DEMOCRATIC FORUM.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MANAMA 01057 01 OF 02 112049Z

(F) GOB (AND AL KHALIFA FAMILY) MAINTAIN THEY DO NOT HAVE THE "RIGHT" TO HAND TO THE PEOPLE AN ALTERNATIVE. RATHER, PEOPLE HAVE THE UNDISPUTED RIGHT TO A VOICE IN GOVERNMENT POLICY AND, AFTER EXTENDED CONSULTATIONS WITH PUBLIC, GOB MUST DETERMINE WHAT FORM OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION BEST SUITS PECULIAR REQUIREMENTS AND TRADITIONS OF BAHRAIN.

(G) IN MEANTIME, GOB WILL ACT URGENTLY BY DECREE TO RESOLVE REAL AND PRESSING PROBLEMS FACING BAHRAINI

PEOPLE, LARGELY BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES AND NOTABLY THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE AND REASONABLY-PRICED HOUSING. GOB WILL ALSO DECREE A LABOR LAW AND, OF COUSE, SECURITY DECREE WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID IRAN HAD BEEN PLEASED WITH GOB'S DECISION AND THAT IRAQ HAD INDICATED THIS WAS GOB'S OWN AFFAIR. HE ADDED GOB HAD LONG AGO LEARNED NOT TO TAKE SERIOUSLY ADVICE FROM OTHER ARABS ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUES. (COMMENT: THIS APPEARED VEILED REFERENCE TO WHAT WE UNDERSTAND WAS EGYPTIAN OBJECTION TO GOB'S DECISION. FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION SAUDI REACTION, ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT IT WAS HIGHLY FAVORABLE SINCE AMIR FREQUENTLY HAS MENTIONED SAUDI DISPLEASURE AT BAHRAIN'S PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIMENT AND WE HEAR THAT SAUDIS HAVE AGREED TO HELP FINANCE CERTAIN ECONOMIC REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WHICH GOB NOW PLANS TO UNDERTAKE IN COMING MONTHS. END COMMENT)

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 01057 02 OF 02 112054Z

64

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 PRS-01 NEAE-00 /042 W

----- 065312

P R 111445Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 2434

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN JORDAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO EGYPT

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SUADI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

CNO WASHINGTON DC

SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAMA 1057

LIMDIS

4. SOMEWHAT WORRIEDLY, FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED USG REACTION TO BAHRAIN'S NEWS. I TOLD HIM I HAD LEFT WASHINGTON BEFORE GOB TOOK THESE MEASURES AND HENCE HAD HEARD NO PRIVATE COMMENTS WITHIN USG. I WAS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE NO USG PUBLIC REACTION AND CONFIDENT THAT WE REGARDED THIS DECISION AS AN INTERNAL BAHRAINI MATTER. FOREIGN MINISTER URGED THAT I TRY TO CONVEY TO WASHINGTON GOB'S DECISION TO DO AWAY WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS A BROADLY-SUPPORTED ONE TAKEN UNANIMOUSLY BY THE ENTIRE CABINET AFTER AGONIZING ASSESSMENT AND WAS NOT ARBITRARY ACT OF "A SHAIKH TRYING TO PROTECT HIS PRIVILEGES".

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 01057 02 OF 02 112054Z

5. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER SPOKE WITH OBVIOUS CONVICTION AND SOME EMOTION AND, CHARACTERISTICALLY, PUT THE BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON GOB'S DECISION TO END PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE "TRUE DEMOCRACY". NEVERTHELESS, AS HE TALKED ON, I COULD NOT ESCAPE IMPRESSION THAT THE EMERGING AL KHALIFA CONCEPT OF "TRUE DEMOCRACY" IS REMINISCENT OF ANOTHER PLACE AND TIME. FORTUNATELY THE FOREIGN MINISTER DOES NOT SPEAK IN ITALIAN AND THIS SMALL ISLAND HAS NO TRAINS TO MAKE RUN ON TIME.
TWINAM

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTION, POLITICAL STABILITY, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MANAMA01057
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750315-0576
From: MANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750962/aaaaccxy.tel
Line Count: 203
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BAHRAIN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS
TAGS: PFOR, BA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006